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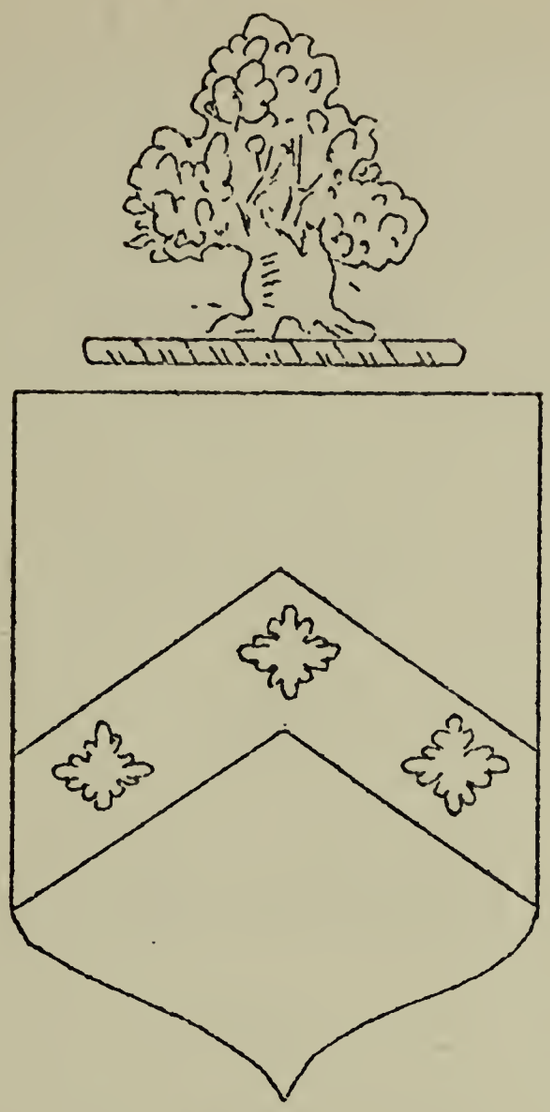

Towne

William Towne, b. 1599 settled at Salem, Mass., 1635, son of Nicholas Towne of Yarmouth, Norfolk, England.

Arme - Argent, on a chevron gules three cross - crosslets of the first.

Crest - An oak tree proper.

From Mathews "American Armory and Blue Book"

1727109

V E R S E S

and

PIONEER MEMORIES

By

ELIZA TOWN BRIGGS

and

O T H E R S

December, 1926

Introduction

To be loved, poetry must be understood. One should feel that the thoughts, pictures and experiences expressed in verse have a common background with us all. In Mrs. Eliza Town Briggs' poems there is the breath of our own lives coupled with the sweetness and patience of her own personality.

The first part of this booklet contains, with one exception, the poems of Mrs. Briggs and a few others which it was thought might be appropriate to the subject matter of her poems. An attempt has been made, as far as possible, to arrange the poems according to the time of the setting: i.e., those about the memories of childhood are first, while those having to do with present thought and thought of the future are at the end of part one. Above all we should remember that the real reason for this booklet is to have Mrs. Briggs' verses in a permanent form.

Facts concerning the Towne and Skeels families make up the last part of this booklet, for many of which thanks are due to: Mr. Charles A. Towne, Park Ridge, Illinois; Mr. Chipman Skeels, Berwyn, Illinois, and Mr. John G. Skeels, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Francis Rollin Fender

The Old Homestead.

As the twilight gathers I'm reading a book
And if you should over my shoulder look
You would wonder for none could you see
Where the lines are all so dear to me.
I turn its leaves with loving care
For gems of memory are written there.
I will read to you if you would like to hear
Some pages from this book so dear.

Over half a century ago,
When these prairies were new, then lo,
A farm house was built on a sloping hill,
And the dear old structure stands there still
Dearer to me than a mansion fair
For my first recollections were centered there.
There were father, mother, sister and brothers
Cherished in memory above all others.

The barn is still there where we used to play
With merry hearts in the new mown hay,
In fancy I see stacks of golden grain
Where hide and seek would be our game,
And the bridge that crossed the babbling rill
That ran just down at the foot of the hill.
Then we were young and free from care,
No thorns in our path, all roses there.

More sacred than all was the evening prayer
When father would take his accustomed chair,
And read from God's word, then kneeling there
Would thank Him for his protecting care.
Now while these memories with me stay,
Would it be wrong for me to say,
"Backward turn backward, O time in your flight
Make me a child again just for tonight."

Russel, son of David and Lydia (Slate) Town and Roxana (Skele) Town, daughter of Belden and Mable (Hill) Skeels, with their five children, arrived at their new home in Paw Paw Grove, Illinois, December 5, 1835, the day my father, David Ralph, was ten years old. The last ten or fifteen miles of the journey they had to face a northwest blizzard. The cover to the wagon was drawn down close to protect the family inside, while the father and the oldest son, Hosea, walked ahead of the horses which followed their master. With no roads, fences, or guide save the instinct of the pioneer, they found their way to the new home. The one-roomed log-cabin had previously been built by Russel's older brother, David A. Town.

The next April, a little daughter, Caroline Evaline, was born and was the first white child born at the Grove. It was a great event! A young Indian from Shabbona's friendly tribe eight miles away came and, by climbing a tree, tried to steal a glimpse of the "Snow baby."

Nellie (Town) Aborn,
daughter of David R. Town.

The two following poems are her compositions.

A PIONEER'S HOME AND PLEASURES.
(1835--1845)

The log house was small for the family
Of seven- there, in the edge of the timber,
A spring of cold water flowed near,
A source of much joy and real comfort.
No Indians were there to molest them
So in safety they dwelt in the cabin.

The mother was cheerful and happy
While caring for husband and children,
And she toiled from sunrise to sunset,-
Nor ceased she even then from her labors;
For after the routine of housework,
Came spinning and weaving and knitting.

There, where the great trees gave shelter,
Early the twilight came stealing
And shadows and gloam filled the cabin,
Save for the light from the fireplace.
Think you she then ceased her toiling?
Folded her tired hands and rested?
Nay, then came knitting in darkness,
For her needles wrought as in daylight.

This was the time to the children,
The dearest of all! For now mother
Sang softly and told them the stories
Of which they never grew weary.
To them her stories were wonders!
As she talked of her childhood's surrounding-
ings,
And my father ne'er ceased in his praises
Of her voice- so sweet! and her singing!

One night, (my father has told me),
He was 'wakened by her singing so sweetly,
Such a beautiful song! Then she laughed
And sang it again 'mid her laughter!
He wondered, and thought he would ask her
To sing it again in the morning,
But she said she knew nothing about it,
The mother had sung as she slumbered.

She remembered the dream; that her brother
And some other boys (just to tease her)
Had fastened her close in the stable
And said she must sing them a song
E'er the door would be opened up for her,
And so 'mid the fun and the frolic,
She sang in the dream that old song for
them.

What was the song? To recall it,
Not a word of it could she remember,
But the boy ne'er forgot the rich sweetness
And beauty of voice and of music
That his mother had sung as she slumbered.

How swiftly the years go flying!
Many children came to that dwelling
E'er they left the log house on the
hillside,
There in the edge of the timber.
The brother tells in his verses
Of joys they had under the elm tree;
The girls, grown older, recall evenings
Of knitting and stories and singing,
Enjoyed by all at the fireside
In the little log house in the timber.

CHRISTMAS TIME.

'Tis Christmas time!
May the Presence of Him
Who came to this earth
With the message of Peace
Come into your life,
And its meaning ne'er cease.
May your heart fill with gladness,
Your life be sublime
Because of the Christ-child
At this Christmas time!

'Tis Christmas time!
Let its joyousness reach
To the depths of your thinking,
Your actions, your speech!
Because you are telling
To sin-laden men
The story that brings
To each heart peace and rest,
When the Christ-love is cradled
In each troubled breast.

A Dream.
Composed April, 1926
at the age of 83 yrs.

In my dream I stepped in the old kitchen door,
Where I had stood many times before,
The room was large and the ceiling low,
The same sun shone with its rosy glow.

The old kitchen table stood out from the wall
Making plenty of room for one and all.
Three brothers, four sisters, each took a
place,
Bowed heads while father or mother said grace.

'Twas the dinner hour but no orchestra played
While the courses on our plates were laid,
But wild birds sang their songs o'er and o'er
Just outside the old kitchen door.

I quietly went from one room to another,
This one was used by Father and Mother.
It looked the same with its bed neatly made,
A blue homespun counterpane over it laid.

Shall I open this door, but where does it go?
It will lead to the attic, don't you know.
Here are the stairs that we used to climb
Up where we played in the olden time.

I will pause a moment for here I may see
Something that looks familiar to me.
The spinning wheel and the great old loom
May be standing there in the twilight gloom.

Now I'll turn back, no loved ones I'll meet
For all of them in the church yard sleep.
Do not disturb them, for my dream is o'er,
Let me steal away from the old kitchen door.

SANTA CLAUS.

I want the Kiddies all to know,
There was a Santa, long ago,
Who hitched his reindeer to a sleigh,
And o'er the snowdrifts sped away.
But we were favored in our home,
We had a Santa all our own,
Was always busy at her work,
Would never from her duties shirk.
She gave to us nice things to eat,
And made our clothes so warm and neat;
If we were sick or had a grief,
We'd fly to Santa for relief,
She'd smooth away our nervous fears,
And wipe away our childish tears,
Then she would bathe our aching head
And tuck us in our trundle bed;
As into dreamland we were led,
We always caught this sweet refrain,
"Hush, my child, be still and slumber,
Holy Angels guard thy bed."
Now our dear Santa's gone away,
With us she could no longer stay.
Tho' time is long, we have to wait
'Til some one ope's the pearly gate.
Then through its portals, as we pause,
Will Mother be, our Santa Claus.

Delle Town North of Chicago, Illinois, grand-niece of Mrs. Briggs and daughter of Adelbert, oldest son of Hosea Town, says concerning the following poem: "I wrote this jingle for my little nieces. If one has ever ridden on the older omnibuses with their bumpy tires and lack of springs one will appreciate the Jiggledy! Dee! for the ride just shook you up unmercifully, at the same time they went so fast that it was rather fun. The lines can be sung to one of the old monotonous tunes, so I called it, The Song of the 'Bus."

THE SONG OF THE 'BUS.

I love to ride on the top of the 'Bus,
Oh! Jiggle de dee!
It makes me feel such a lofty cuss
Oh! Jiggle de dee!
The autos round us fret and fuss,
Their drivers sit and stew at us,
But we are high above this muss,
Oh! Jiggledy! Dee! Dee! Dee!
Oh! Jiggledy! Dee! Dee! Dee!

We think it fun to ride so high,
Oh! Jiggle de dee!
Much nearer to the bright blue sky,
Oh! Jiggle de dee!
Round the corners we just fly,
And all the taxis we pass by.
Such fun to ride! Oh me! Oh, my!
Oh! Jiggledy! Dee! Dee! Dee!
Oh! Jiggledy! Dee! Dee! Dee!

This is the life! Hip! Hip! Hur-ray!
Oh! Jiggle de dee!
We'll sing this song while on our way,
Oh! Jiggle de dee!
We love to ride like this all day
Past the stores with windows gay
Through the parks where children play,
Oh! Jiggledy! Dee! Dee! Dee!
Oh! Jiggledy! Dee! Dee! Dee!

A bridge, duck quick now, if you please,
Oh! Jiggle de dee!
Tuck in your elbows and your knees.
Oh! Jiggle de dee!
Riding close to the tops of the trees,
There is a lovely balmy breeze,
Leaves tickle nose and make us sneeze.
Oh! Jiggledy! Dee! Dee! Dee!
Oh! Jiggledy! Dee! Dee! Dee!

Another one of Hosea Town's granddaughters in Chicago, Nellie Fender, daughter of Stella Town Grimwood wrote these words to be sung to the music of Schubert's Serenade.

WAYS OF PEACE.

When will peace be more than dreaming?
When will men cease strife?
When good will is worth redeeming,
When we value life.

Why are moral standards lowered?
Why such throngs in want?
Nature's laws are broken, outlawed,
When grim war is wont.

May we train no more for battle
But for brotherhood.
"Be not like dumb driven cattle,"
Go seek others good.

Give allegiance to another
Nationality,
In which each to each is brother,
Our humanity.

Roxana Skeels Town, mother of Eliza Town Briggs was born October 5,1799 in Dunham, Canada between Montreal and High Gate, Vermont. Saxe's Mill,three miles from High Gate and near the Canadian border is named for the father of John G. Saxe, the noted poet. Mrs.Hememway in her "Vermont Gazetteer" quotes quite at length from the papers of Mrs.M.E.W.Skeels concerning the

very earliest history of the community and the following poem. (Rhyming must have been a sort of family pastime.) We are grateful to them both for the "Poet of High Gate" by Mrs. M.E.W. Skeels. (Notice that she uses the same style of rhythm, meter and rhyme as our Aunt Eliza.)

THE POET OF HIGH GATE.

Away up north where the wild oak grows
And where Rock river overflows,
Where rocks, the hills are piled upon-
There lived Uncle Peter and his son John.
And John was a roaving lad I've heard
Who whistled as oft as he spoke a word.
He ran about with the cattle and flocks
Picking up pebbles and clambering rocks;
He kicked around and tumbled about
Till his hat was lost and his elbows out,
And the wind went whistling thro' his hair
Like the autumn winds when the trees are bare,
And John grew tall like the maple tree
And lean and lank as he could be;
'Twas little he cared for rain or sleet,
He was not troubled,-if enough to eat,-
He went without a shoe or stocking,-
And the way John looked, O dear, 'twas shocking!
He loved the woods much better than school
And some people called him Saxe's fool.
He grew and grew till quite a long John,
His father thought fit to put reins on:
He went to school and became a man,
And now believe it, you who can,
He's grown a poet and quite a sage-
His praise is spoken on many a page-
And John has got him a little wife

As pretty's you please, upon your life!
He more than a sonnet loves a son
'Tis true, for he now has three and
one;
And yet 'tis true at the present day
He keeps his same odd, singular way.
He sometimes goes with his elbows out
While his hair is hanging his brow
about,
Waiting for the winds to comb it again
While he is whistling some childish
strain.
He always sits heels over his head-
For he rests much better than when in
bed;
To be an odd genius he is inclined,
For he rides for pleasure with his face-
behind.
His poems are neater far than his cloak,
And he loves to deal a capital joke.
He's fond of resting and fond of play,
And fond of satire every day,
He's fond of fiction and fonder of facts
Yes, a wonderful man is John G. Saxe.
P.S.
Pray kindly, John, my ditty excuse,
For I've captured once your saucy muse.

The Skeel-Town genius for rhyming was again manifested in O.M. Town, son of Russel, and the youngest brother of Eliza (Town) Briggs. Moving west to Kansas in "76", using his soldier's claim, he homesteaded 160 acres in the Sun Flower state. Money being scarce, it was a common thing for the men to go out on the prairies, gather up old dry buffalo and cattle bones and sell them, a good load bringing around three or four dollars in the nearby town.

Oscar, feeling the urge, had a good many times, resorted to this. On one occasion, happening to meet a disreputable old ox, he, on the spur of the moment, composed this;

TO AN OLD OX.

Old ox, old ox, how came you here?
I've seen you not since you were a steer.
Your rump sticks up, your tail hangs down
And soon your carcass, I'll haul to town.

The ox looked up as much as to say,
"I know I soon shall pass away,
But when I'm dead don't haul me to town
But bury my bones beneath the ground."

"The Old Elm Tree" was written in 1900 by Zera, another son of Russel and Roxana Skeels Town. This tree was very large - the largest in Paw Paw Grove - and stood in the east edge of the timber, very near the one roomed log cabin where Russel settled when he came to Illinois in 1835. Here four children were born, Eliza being the youngest of the family. The "four" mentioned in the following verses were Zera, Elizabeth, Caroline and Ellen. That Caroline Town Kern was the "first white child born in Lee County, Illinois" is the inscription on her monument in South Paw Paw Cemetery.

THE OLD ELM TREE.

I am going to write a verse or two-
I am not a poet- but just that you
May know the joys that came to me
Under the shade of an old elm tree.

It was nearly sixty years ago,
When I was only a boy, you know,
With three little sisters to play with me
Under the shade of an old elm tree.

The tree was large and rough and old,
Its roots came out, up high and bold,
Forming three alcoves, nice as could be
For little homes 'neath the old elm tree.

We gathered shells from the brook close by
To hold our bread and butter and pie,
We ate our suppers and drank our tea
Under the shade of the old elm tree.

Time sped on! Where are the four?
Two have gone to the other shore,
While the other two were left to see
The falling to earth of the old elm tree.

The following poem was composed by Mrs. Eliza Town Briggs in her seventy-seventh years when she was blind and crippled and was dedicated to her sister, Mrs. Ellen Town Hallock for her eightieth birthday.

TO ELLEN

In a sheltered nook close by the wood
A very small log cabin stood,
The logs were rough, the walls were bare,
A pioneer family-was `sheltered there.

One night when all was hushed and still
Save the plaintive notes of a whip-poor-
will,
A burdened stork was hovering near
And plainly showed no signs of fear.

He said, "I will here look in and see
If there is room for a little wee-wee."
The back log burning strong and bright
Filled the cabin with cheery light.

Several children were sleeping there,
The mother's arms seemed free from care.
"This precious burden right here I'll lay,
I'll see it again some future day."

Morning came, there was great surprise
As the children stood with open eyes
To see the sister who had come their way.
Mama said, "She has come to stay."

"What's her name?" "Ellen, 'twill be,"
And to this they did all agree.
We will leave her here to thrive and grow,
She'll have much of warmth and love, I
know.

Twenty years had come and gone
And Ellen to a woman had grown,
Her eyes were blue, she had auburn hair,
And to her friends she was gentle and
fair.

She was still at home by her father's side,
She seemed to be his special pride.
Of all the laddies who came her way,
She hadn't encouraged any to stay.

Young Harvey Hallock called one day,
He chatted awhile and went his way.
'Twas soon to fair Ellen's side he turned,
She promised to be his bride,we learned.

Engaged, they both began to plan
A home befitting a fairy land.
The picture was shattered in sixty-one
When war was declared and already begun.

Her brother and lover, strong and brave,
Both went to help their country save,
They were in battles more than one,
Ere Ellen's lover, Harvey, went down.

From the bloody fray they took him away
To a hospital cot where long he lay,
Fair dreams of the future numbing the pain,
Gave hope of meeting his Ellen again.

Kind doctors and nurses did all they could,
In time their efforts proved to be good.
They finally got him on his feet,
Discharged, sent home, his sweetheart to meet.

He grew very strong, he thought quite well.
They married and went to their home to dwell.
In course of time the children were there
Their home to cheer, and their love to share.

We will now pass to a space of time
Where Harvey and Ellen again we find.
Over fifty years they struggled together
Through days of sunshine and stormy
weather.

To the crippled soldier, a messenger came
Who gave him release from care and pain,
The Angels bore him with tender care
Away to the "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere".

Ellen has passed her eightieth birthday,
With us we hope she may longer stay.
She has comforts of life and love, very
near,
Children and friends her pathway to
cheer.

Dear sister, if ever you're gloomy and blue
Think of those who are very much worse off
than you.
Remember we still have each other, we two,
And so, with God's blessing, I bid you
adieu.

Pioneering in Medical Missions

Some of the poems preceding are concerned with the early struggle for existence in an unsettled wilderness. But that period of providing for and rearing a family under primitive conditions has passed. This more modern era makes pioneering not a matter of forming new communities so much as to better those already formed, to develop and improve the social order.

One notable example of the new pioneering spirit was the activity of Zera Town's daughter Kate Van Dyke Town, and her husband, Dr.George B.Crews, who is both an ordained minister and physician. Immediately after their marriage they sailed for China in company with Dr.Gamewell and under orders from the Parent Board of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This company started in August of 1883 and they did not reach their final destination, the interior of China, until Christmas. The journey to their station, located at Chung King, in the province of Sze Cheuen and near the source of the Yangste Kiang river, was an adventure in itself, for up to that time there had been only two white women so far inland. Dr. Crews and his wife toiled here for three years until they were forced to flee for their lives in the wake of a riot. Everything that they owned had to be left behind and during the night they escaped in native clothing. While fleeing they became separated for months, neither one knowing whether the other had been killed or not. But they finally reached the coast unharmed. It being unsafe to return to their former post, they stayed in Peking for the three following years and then sailed for America because of the ill health of Dr. Crews.

Before an election in which the temperance question played a prominent part, Mrs. Brigg's pastor requested her to compose a poem to help the cause. She asked him how long before he wished it. "In a week, if possible," he replied. The following was ready at the time desired.

Warning.

Can you tell me of anything worse
Than the awful sin and withering curse
Of liquor as 'tis used by men,
Whether in palace or in lowest den?
It ruins its victims both body and soul
And takes all they have to pay the toll.

Drink takes the husband from the home
And leaves the wife to weep alone,
No, not alone, for baby's there,
Too young the mother's grief to share.
She presses her darling to her breast
And to the Savior leaves the rest.

Drink takes the widow's boy so fair
Whom she has reared with tender care;
She's looking forward to the day
When he'll be her support and stay.
Then she thinks of the places of sin
Where the young are tempted in.

Alone, she breathes a silent prayer,
"God keep him from the tempter's snare."
Yes, this sin is in our land,
It is not far but near at hand.
We see its blight upon the street,
We see its blight on men we meet.

We must wipe out this curse and save
Our brothers from a drunkard's grave,
And save the children marching on
To fill the ranks when we are gone.
Now to the Christians I have this to say,
Rise up in your might and vote as you pray.

AGE.

Yes, they say we're growing old,
But we would rather not be told,
Our hair is thin and turning gray
And wrinkles now have come to stay.

But, we are old, it is a fact!
And of the truth there is no lack!
Our joints are stiff, we're weak of limb,
Our ears are dull, our eyes are dim.

But we remember, don't we, Nett,
When we were in the "upper-set."
Just as happy, young and gay
As any girls we see today.

But youthful days for us are o'er,
Old Father Time waits at the door.
So to old age we must submit,
And in the chimney-corner sit!

WEARY.

Weary, so weary, longing for rest;
Let me sleep on my Savior's breast.
The way has been long, and Oh, so dark!
The storms have tossed my weakened barque.

Yes, sometimes I am weary of life
With its tumult and its strife,
For as I look back I cannot see
That the world is any better for me.

Weary, weary, yet Lord, will there be
A happy resting place for me?
And if I may enter the Golden Gate
Will the loved ones there for me await?

Yes, I know they will welcome me there
In that Heavenly Home so bright and fair.
Then, weary heart, you must be still!
And wait the blessed Master's will.

Towne Family

William Towne married Joanna Blessing in the Church of St. Nicholas, Yarmouth, Norfolkshire, England and in the same edifice their first six children were baptized. They emigrated to America. In Salem, Mass. in 1640 William Towne had a grant of lands in the "Northfields", where he lived until 1651 and then removed with his family to Topsfield, where he died about 1672, his wife surviving him.

"Goodman William[1] Towne was a man of character, substance, and social position." About twenty years after his death, three of his daughters were among the many reputable people of Salem who were accused during the noted witchcraft delusion. Two of them were hung and the third narrowly escaped with her life.

Their children were:

1. Rebecca bapt. Feb. 21, 1621 m. Francis Nourse or Nurse of Salem.
2. John bapt. Feb. 16, 1624. Never m.
3. Susannah bapt. Oct. 20, 1625. Never m.
4. Edmund bapt. June 28, 1628.
5. Jacob bapt. Mar. 11, 1632 m. Catherine Simonds.
6. Mary bapt. Aug. 24, 1634 m. Isaac Estey or Easty.
7. Sarah bapt. Sept. 3, 1648 m. 1st. Edmund Bridges, 2nd Peter Cloyes.
8. Joseph b. 1639, bapt. Sept. 3, 1648.

History records that Rebecca Towne Nurse "was an intelligent, pious, devout woman, a veritable mother in Israel. Against her good name and fair fame no breath of suspicion had yet been uttered." She was in her 71st year when tried and executed. Her

sisters Mary Easty and Sarah Cloyes were tried the same year, 1692 but remained longer in prison, at least Mary did. Their petitions to the judges, Governor and ministers are among the most notable and touching of any on record of the many victims, especially Mary Easty's. She was said to be "an excellent and pious matron." There is nothing to tell us how Sarah happened to escape.

Strange religious zeal was it not that accused so many of being "devils in the forms of angels of light?" Increase and Catton Mather, John Hathorne ancestor of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Salem's minister, Parris were among the persecutors. They believed in the Scriptural injunction to "not suffer a witch to live."

Besides mistaken religious zeal, many other elements were responsible for the Salem witchcraft delusion. First there was a general belief in demonology, there was much superstition and fear. The minister of the village church, Parris was bigoted and in league with a certain very wealthy man of the place named Putnam who was very unpopular with some. Several years before there had been disagreement between him and his friends and the people of Topsfield, the Townes and Eastys among them. The Nurses sided with their relatives.

Putnam's wife Ann, daughter Ann, twelve years old and Parris' daughter, Elizabeth, nine years old were of the group, of mostly very young girls, that accused certain persons of being witches.

They were governed, apparently, by hysteria and hallucinations, but possibly not all together. The courts accepted spectral evidence at that time and were unwilling to hear testimony in behalf of the accused. John Willard, (a near relative of Samuel Willard, president of Harvard College) tried to testify for some of the poor victims but was then himself accused and executed. A former pastor of the village church who had gone to a parish in Maine was sent for, tried and hung.

We look back in horror and shame upon this history, but what will our descendants think of us who allow certain powers that be to hang the reputations of so many good and well meaning people? What will they think of our fears, superstitions, belief in demonology, faulty courts and lack of justice?

Ann Putnam lived to realize the error of her conduct and in her confession read by her pastor in the village church in 1706, these three sisters are the only ones she mentions by name. She says "And particularly as I was a chief instrument of accusing good-wife Nurse and her two sisters I desire to lie in the dust, and be humbled for it-*** and earnestly beg forgiveness of God-*****"

In 1712 the church to which Rebecca Nurse belonged "reversed its censure by blotting out the record of her excommunication, that it might not be a reproach to her memory and an occasion of grief to her children."

At Salem, Mass. a monument to the memory of these two sisters has been erected near their old homestead, Danvers, known as the Rebecca Nurse monument. Nearby is the Rebecca Nurse house built in 1636.

Second Generation

Jacob[2] Towne (son of William[1]) bapt. March 11, 1632 in Yarmouth, England m. Catharine Simonds of Salem, June 26, 1657. They lived in Salem about twelve years. He made his will in Topsfield and died the third day after, November 27, 1704, aged 73 years. His son John[3] was executor.

Their children were:

1.-John b. April 2, 1658 m. Mary Smith.
2. Jacob b. February 13, 1660.
3. Catharine b. Feb. 25, 1662 m. Elisha Perkins.
4. Deliverance b. August 5, 1664 m. Robert Styles, 1684.
5. Ruth b. August 5, 1664 m. John Styles, 1684.
6. Edmund b. July 21, 1666 d. December 25, 1736.

Third Generation

John[3] Towne (Jacob[2], William[1]) b. at Topsfield April 2, 1658 m. Mary Smith, February 2, 1680. He was the first of the Towne families who spelled their name without the "e". He was a very efficient man in town affairs where he was born. When the town of Framingham, Mass. was incorporated, at the first town meeting he was elected selectman, and was often afterwards elected to the same office. He removed to Oxford in 1712 where at the first town meeting he was elected town clerk, in 1713 he was made selectman. "He was one of four persons who first met to consider the formation of a church, and at its organization was chosen deacon which office he held to the close of his life, when his son

Jonathan succeeded him." John[3] died in 1740, aged 82 years.

Their children were:
1. Mary, 2. John, 3. Israel, 4. Esther, 5.-Ephraim, 6. Jonathan, 7. David, 8. Samuel, 9. Edmund, 10. John. Jr.

Fourth Generation

Ephraim[4] Town (John [3], Jacob[2], William[1]) b. at Topsfield April 22, 1688 m. Sarah Kenny, December 31, 1719 and moved to Framingham. His was one of the first thirty families to go to Oxford, Mass.

Their children were:
1. Paul b. March 14, 1722, d. April, 1722.
2. Silas b. March 14, 1722.
3.-Edmund b. August 19, 1724.
4. Thomas b. April 1, 1727, d. 1727.

Fifth Generation

Edmund Town[5] (Ephraim[4], John[3], Jacob[2], William[1]) b. at Oxford, August 19, 1724 m. Abigail, daughter of Jonathan Brewer of Framingham (according to "Framingham Vital Records," page 286) January 6, 1755, the groom being of Hoosac Fort. In March 1756 he purchased of David Brewer a piece of land in New Framingham. His wife d. in 1772 and he d. in 1779. In "The Hoosac Valley," Niles-Putnam 1912, page 538 is this. "The above Muster Roll was forwarded to Col. Ephraim Williams, it is believed, by Sergt. Edmund Town, who was a messenger or express between Fort Mass. and Col. Williams Greenbush (near Albany, N.Y.) encampment until his march to

Lake George." It is possible Edmund Town carried Col. Ephraim William's last will-drawn up July 22, 1755 containing a clause which provided for the founding of a free school in East Hoosac, North Adams now, and West Hoosac now Williamstown, for the children of Fort Mass. garrison soldiers. This bequest was the foundation upon which Williams College was built. Page 205 of "Hoosac Valley" (above). "The original founders of Bennington and Pownal, Vermont were veteran commanders and soldiers in the French and Indian War who rocked the cradles of the Revolutionary "Sons of Freedom" in Fort Mass. and Fort Hoosac." "Edmund Town was a selectman at the first meeting for the election of town officers held May 8, 1763 at Pownall, Vermont", says another authority.

He no doubt performed much of the service listed under his name in "Mass. Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolution" from the community where he lived, Williamstown, Mass. but as he had a son of the same name, the distinction in service is difficult to make. There is a tradition that the son who died in Georgia, northern Vermont in 1800 was not in the Revolution, (however that is very doubtful).

From History of Western, Mass. we have; Edmund Town was a Rev. soldier from Williamstown, Mass. Edmund Town was a Rev. soldier from Dalton, Mass. (Dalton is about 15 miles south of Williamstown). Edmund[5] and Abigail (Brewer) Town's.

Children were:

1. Abigail b. 1756 m. John Knight.
2. Edmund b. 1758 m. for 2nd wife, Polly (McMaster) Sabin at Georgia, Vermont,

November 7, 1797 and died there August 24, 1800.
3. Catherine b. 1760 m. Stephen Patchen.
4.-David b. June 25, 1762 m. Lydia Slate
5. Martha
6. Jonathan m. - Clark
7. Prudence b. Nov. 9, 1766 m. John Kingsley.
8. Silas b. October 1768.

Sixth Generation

David[6] Town (Edmund[5], Ephraim[4], John[3], Jacob[2], William[1] b. at Deerfield, Mass. June 25, 1762, d. September 5, 1828 at Waterbury, Vermont and is there buried, m. November 28, 1782 Lydia Slate of Bernardston, Mass. daughter of Capt. Joseph and Mary (White) Slate (Cap. in Rev.). Lydia, his first wife was b. February 4, 1764 d. August 15, 1815. m. 2nd wife Olive (Dole) Abbott, b. July 24, 1770 d. June 27, 1834. David[6] was in Rev. service from Williamstown, Mass, at 16 years of age, he received a pension.

Their children were:
1. Joel 1st. b. May 29, 1783 d. Dec. 1795, (probably named for mother's brother who died at 10 years of age.
2. Catharine 1st. b. July 1, 1784, d. July, 1805.
3. Lydia b. Dec. 24, 1785, d. Sept. 1886, m. Joel Carter.
4. David A. b. July 31, 1787 d. Apr. 23, 1861, m. Betsey Farnham.
5. Ahijah b. Dec. 31, 1790, d. May 29, 1821, m. Harriet -
6. Hosea 1st. b. Aug. 24, 1792, d. Nov. 14, 1814.
7. Edmund b. Sept. 4, 1794, d. May 8, 1881, m. Sally Straw Smith.
8. Joel b. Aug. 24, 1796, d. in Grand Isle, Vermont, the only one of the family re-

9.-Russel b. May 4, 1798, d. Dec. 31, 1867 m. Roxana Skeels.
10. Philura b. April 27, m.-Butler. Lived in Indiana.
11. Melita b. Feb. 15, 1802 m.-Williams lived in Indiana.
12. Maranda b. Feb. 5, 1804, d. Feb. 14, 1804.
13. Adolphus b. April 12, 1805 went to Minnesota.
14. Catherine b. January 9, 1809 d. June 27, 1874 m. William Jenkins.

By the 2nd wife was one son, named
15. Hosea b. April 13, 1817, d. July 9, 1908, buried in Wyoming Cemetery Paw Paw, Illinois the first land of which was given by his brother, David A. and where David A., wife, and some other relatives are buried - a beautiful spot.

Seventh Generation

Russel[7] Town (David[6], Edmund[5], Ephraim[4], John[3], Jacob[2], William[1]) b. Mass., May 4, 1798, d. Dec. 31, 1867, buried in South Paw Paw Cemetery, (he and his wife), m. Roxana Skeels Oct. 18, 1821, according to marriage record of Franklin County, Ohio. This record also spells his name Russell Town but like his ancestors he, apparently, did not believe in any frills in his spelling and when he makes his own family record in the Bible it is Russel Town m. Roxana Skeel Oct, 14, 1821. Roxana, daughter of Belden (Rev. soldier from Conn.) and Mabel (Hill) Skeels was born in Dunham, Canada, Oct. 5, 1799, d. April 7, 1883.

Their children were:
1.-Hosea Russel b. July 25, 1822 d. Nov.

2, 1882, m. Jane Ann Goble, Dec. 17, 1844.

2. Harriet R. b. Jan. 11, 1824, d. 1854, m. Horrace Pine.
3. David R. b. Dec. 5, 1825, d. Dec. 1893, m. Delia M. Pine. This brother and sister were children of Daniel and Lucy (Allen) Pine married Dec. 31, 1812 at Williston, Vermont, closely related to Adoniram Judson and the Ethan Allen family.
4. Zera b. Aug. 7, 1830 in Vermont and called for that reason the "Green Mountain" boy, d. Oct. 26, 1811, m. Melvina -
5. Elizabeth b. January 7, 1834, d. 1861.
6. Caroline E. b. April 21, 1836, first white child b. in Lee Co., Ill., d. Feb. 22, 1884. m. J. W. Kern.
7. Oscar M. b. May 21, 1838 d. Sept. 10, 1910 m. 1st - Eaton of a noted family of Mass. descendant of a Mayflower passenger m. 2nd - - .
8. Ellen M. b. March 17, 1841, d. July 13, 1924 m. Harvey Hallock.
9. Eliza A. Town, b. November 28, 1843 m. John Briggs

Fidelia, Catherine and Charles died young.

Eighth Generation

Hosea R.[8] Town (Russel[7], David[6], Edmund[5], Ephraim[4], John [3], Jacob[2], William[1]) b. in Clarke Co. Ohio, July 25, 1822, d. Nov. 2, 1882 m. in Paw Paw, Lee Co., Ill. Dec. 17, 1844. Jane Ann Goble b. Luzerne Co., Penn. Feb. 12, 1818 d. Jan. 17, 1904 in Nebraska, buried S. Paw Paw beside her husband. She was the 9th child of Ezekiel and Margaret (Thompson) Goble, granddaughter of Ezekiel Sr. and Phebe (Peck) Goble. Ezekiel Sr. was a sergeant and his father, Jonas Goble was a wagoner in the Revolution from Morris Co., N.J. Her other grandfather James Thompson was in the Rev., service is described in"Penn. Archives" 5th Series, Vol. 5,

Page 371, also page 376. Hosea R.[8] Town was in Civil War service.

Their children were:

1. F. Antonette b. Nov. 7, 1845 m. Judd Grummon - moved to Nebraska.
2. Adelbert L. b. Oct. 1, 1848, served in Civil War, d. May 9, 1917 m. Chrissie J - b. 1852, d. 1912.
3. Harriet J. b. Sept. 8, 1850 d. March 8, 1851.
4. L. Stellaphene b. Feb. 27, 1853, d. July 16, 1921, m. William H. Grimwood, Sept. 3, 1871.
5. Elmer D. b. Jan. 5, 1856 d. May 3, 1903 m. Josie Smith Dec. 25, 1876.
6. Oristus E. b. Jan. 28, 1858. d. Dec. 6, 1859.
7. Ephcema J. b. March 11, 1861 d. Sept. 18, 1862.

Phebe (Peck) Goble was the daughter of Timothy and Phebe (-) Peck. Timothy was the son of Joseph Peck and Lydia (Ball, daughter of Edward Ball of N.J.). They lived in Newark, N.J. Joseph was b. Oct. 9, 1675 the son of Joseph Sr. and Sarah (Alling) Peck. Sarah Alling was daughter of Roger Alling of New Haven, N.J. and married Nov. 28, 1672. Joseph, Sr. was the son of Henry Peck who in the spring of 1638 was among the first settlers in New Haven. He in turn was the son of Robert Peck of Beccles Suffolk, England. Henry Peck came to Boston with Gov. Eaton in 1637. The Peck coat of arms is to be found in "American Armory and Blue Book".

Through the Thompson line the Gobles are descendants of William Buckman, English Friend or Quaker who came to America in the "Welcome" with William Penn. William and Mary

Buckman's daughter, Sarah who came with her parents from Billinghurst, Sussex, England in 1682 m. Edward Beck, a German Friend. Their daughter Susanna Beck m. Wm. Skelton, Welch Friend, Feb. 28, 1748, he was in the French and Indian war service. Their daughter, Susanna Skelton m. James Thompson, Scotch Irish Presbyterian.

William Skelton was the son of John and Jane (Fearlamb) Skelton, Fearlamb is Irish Quaker. There seems to be a variety of nationalities fused in this Goble family. That was the dream of William Penn to harmonize these different peoples. The Gobles who first settled in Charleston, S.C. have always been staunch Baptists going about 30 mi. to church when they first removed to West Hanover near Morristown, N.J. in 1717.

A very good record of the Slate family is to be found in "History of Bernardston, Mass." by Kellogg. Among other interesting things told of Capt. Joseph Slate is what his son, Israel, (bro. of Lydia (Slate) Town), tells. He states that during Shay's Rebellion, the principal government men in town were his father Capt. Slate and two others. In this book are pictures of Israel Slate and old homesteads that have been occupied until the present time, or were recently, by the family. Young David Town of Williamstown, Mass. is mentioned on Page 256. Perhaps the Captain was not pleased with his daughter's choice of a husband. We wonder???

Aunt Eliza had two grandfathers who were in the Revolution; David Town and Belden Skeels and two great grandfathers, Captain Joseph Slate and Edmund Town. It is very likely that her great grandfather Hill was also in the service. We know that her great grandfather Samuel Skeels served in the French and Indian War and died of camp fever in 1759.

Skeels

"Skeels of Chatteris Coat of Arms"
Argent, three piles gules, two issuant from the chief and one in base, each charged with water, bouget argent.
Crest, a swan argent, charged on the wing with an escallop, gules and resting the dexter foot on a water-bouget.
Motto FIDENS DEO CONFIDENS in a streamer.

From the "Record of the College of Arms."

Skeels Family

A good sketch of the early pioneer Skeels families is written by Mr. John G. Skeels who has studied the subject quite extensively. The following is quoted from a letter that he wrote in October, 1926. Some notes by Nellie I. G. Fender are added, particularly about the Belden Skeels family and indicated by a *.

The research of the Skeels has been both easy and difficult. Easy because every name thus far found whether spelled Skeels, Skeel, Skeele or Skeeles belongs to the same family; difficult because so few know anything of their family history, and many care very little. My father did not know his grandfather's name nor the fact that he was buried within two miles of my early home.

As to the lineage of Belden Skeels I am sorry to say that I have very little data for you are the first living descendant of said Belden that I have found, however, what I have I will give and hope that you may find it of some help.

There were four brothers and one sister in Belden's family and Belden, Truman, and Samuel were men of the Revolutionary War. Samuel was my great grandfather and died in Benson, Vermont and his grave is still there.

All the children were born in Conn. and Belden and Samuel early moved to Vermont, Samuel to Benson and Belden to Shoreham a few miles from Benson. Benson is my native town.

I have a long line of descendants of Truman, a few of Simeon and none of Anna but quite a complete line of Samuel.

I presume that later Belden moved to

northern Vermont* but history says he went from Shoreham to Ohio.

The Skeels family originated in Denmark and there is now a Skeels castle at Copenhagen, at least it was there in 1910. There are Skeels families living at Copenhagen.

They came with or shortly after the invasion of England by the Danes and settled in the vicinity of Chatteries north of London. I have corresponded with several of the family now living in London and north of London. There are many tombstones bearing the name in the vicinity of Chatteries. They have a very pretty Coat of Arms of which I have a copy. This is from the record of the College of Arms and is entitled "Skeels of Chatteris Coat of Arms."

The names of John and Hannah Skeels appear appended to the church Covenant, so they were Covenanters.

Hannah was the dau. of Roger Terril.

John was born about 1640 and he and his wife left England about 1670 on account of religious persecution during the reign of Charles II and with 37 of the signers landed at Stratford, Conn. and soon moved to Woodbury, Conn.

He took up land at Woodbury and there lived and died, Oct. 5, 1721, his widow died Nov. 11, 1730. (Woodbury records).

Their children were:
1. John d. in infancy.
2. Hannah m. Benj. Hickox.

*Moved to Dunham, Canada about 50 miles S.E. of Montreal before he went to Ohio.

3.-John our ancestor, b. in Nov. 1678, m. Sarah (Nichols ?) d. May 25, 1727.
4. Thomas d. a bachelor Oct. 30, 1709, was sergeant in army of Conn. *
5. Elizabeth b. Apr. 1683 (nothing further)
6. Abigail b. 1686 (nothing further)
7. Ephraim b. July 1688 (nothing further) - From Woodbury records.

Second Generation

John[2] Skeels (John[1]) bap. Nov. 1679. d. May 25, 1727 in Woodbury, m. Sarah (Nichols ?)

Their children were:
1. Thomas, of which I have a long line, b. Dec. 27, 1711 m. Prudence Slosson.
2. Miriam b. Sept. 1, 1713 m. Bushnell Boswick.
3. John b. Nov. 1715 m. first Patience Hinman then Mabel Booth. Of these there is a complete line.
4. Ephraim b. June 1717 m. Mary Marks (one child, Hannah b. Oct. 21, 1747).
5. Abigail, b. May 10, 1719, m. John Tracy.*
6. Jonathan b. Mar. 10, 1721 m. Abagail Slosson.

*South Britain His. Page 80. In King Philip's War 1709 two men of Woodbury lost their lives, Sergeant Thomas Skeel and John J. Johnson.

*Widow of Jonathan below, according to "Delano Family" by J. A. Delano, 1899, page 169 - not of this family.

7.-Samuel[3], our common ancestor, b. Feb. 23, 1723, m. Lydia Belden, daughter of Silas and Abagail Belden, *- served in the French and Indian War and died of camp fever in 1759. Served under Lord Howe.
8. Sarah, b. Feb. 1725.
9. Hannah b. Aug. 3, 1727.

Woodbury records.

*There is a possibility that Lydia Belden born Sept. 6, 1725 dau. of Josiah and Mabel (Wright) Belden was the one of two cousins by that name who married our ancestor Samuel Skeels instead of Lydia born May 1, 1730 dau. of Silas and Abagail (Robbins) Belden. Josiah Belden's mother Dorothy (Willard) Belden was of the famous Willard family which has furnished two presidents for Harvard College and so many preachers, teachers and professors in America.

Of the more than fourteen thousand names of the Skeels family collected, a very large proportion of them it seems, represent these professions, showing distinctive Willard traits. Lydia seems to be a very popular name in the Belden family and eight different Lydias are indicated by the following dates, either married, born or died: m. 1657, b. 1690, b. 1694, d. 1714, b. 1715, b. Sept. 6, 1725, b. May 1, 1730, b. 1755.

Third Generation

Samuel[3] Skeels (John[1], John[2]) d. before Feb. 3, 1759 of camp fever, m. Lydia Belden in Conn.

Their children were:

1.-Belden b. Apr. 10, 1751. Settled in Shoreham, Vt. and later moved to Ohio with one son.*
Your great-great-grandfather, I judge from your letter (nothing further of record) that he served in the Revolutionary War. (From war records).

2. Truman b. Feb. 4, 1753, Corporal in Rev. War, m. Chloe Hill Dau. of Billious and Lydia Hill. A long line.

3. Samuel b. May 29, 1755 at Woodbury, Conn. d. in Benson, Vt. * during the great fever epidemics, in 1812.

*Moved from Conn. to Vermont, from Vermont to Canada and then to Ohio. Married Mabel Hill, probably a sister of Chloe Hill who his brother Truman married. Belden and Mabel's first two children, Molly and Joseph were baptized in 1777. Records of Church in Eastbury in Glastonbury, Conn. New "England Hist. and Gen. Register" 60-1906 Page 382. There was a large family of children of whom Roxana born Oct. 5, 1799 and Nelson b. May 15, 1802 in Dunham, Canada were the youngest. Marriage Records of Franklin Co. Ohio have notice of the marriage of Russell Town and Roxana Skeels Oct. 18, 1821. The same year marriages of Roxana's two cousins Harvey and Polly Skeels, children of Truman and Chloe (Hill) Skeels are there recorded.

*Was also in Rev. Service from Conn.

4. Anna (or Amer) Bap. Jan. 30, 1757 at Woodbury (nothing further).
5. Simeon - Feb. 3, 1759 (Posthumous) moved to Roxbury, Vt. and to New York State.

Fourth Generation

The following record is made up of the facts known by Eliza Town Briggs, granddaughter of Belden Skeels and her nieces, Mrs. Nelson, Mrs. Aborn and Miss Mabel Skeels of Delaware, Ohio, also early records quoted of baptism of first children.

(William*?) Belden Skeels[4], (Samuel[3], John[2], John[1],) b. Apr. 10, 1751 m. Mabel Hill in Conn. served in the Rev. from Conn.

Their children were, as far as known (there were possibly more in Canada):
1. Molly bap. 1777 in Glastonbury, Conn.
2. Joseph, bap. 1777 in Glastonbury, Conn.
3. William
4. Samuel
5. Lydia m. - White went to Ill. to live.
6. Nelson b. May 15, 1802, d. 1859, m. Elanor Bennett.
7. Roxana b. Oct. 5, 1799, d. Apr. 7, 1883, m. Russel Town.

*Sampsell Skeels of Delaware, Ohio tells his sister Mabel that their great grandfather was William Belden Skeels.

Russell Henry Skeels of Columbus, Ohio, grand-son of Russell Town Skeels says, "during my childhood, I often heard of 'Uncle Belden' sometimes 'Uncle Bell', but I do not know the relationship." His great uncle Burton and wife Clarissa

(Palmer) Skeels, now dead, are survived by two children (Mabel, spinster and Sampsell whose wife was May Reed). They live upon and now own a farm that came to their grandfather, (it must have been their great-grandfather) as a direct grant of land to Revolutionary war soldiers. "I have been told that our family came from Nova Scotia (probably Dunham, Canada) and that they were pioneers in Central Ohio," he writes.

This property might have been deeded from the government to either Billious (or Billiam) Hill or to Belden Skeels for these were the names of their two ancestors, as they appear in the war records of Conn. (that is if Chloe and Mabel Hill were sisters). Billious Hill, the first white child born in Goshen, Conn. was Chloe's father and she married Belden's brother Truman. I think we will find that these two women are sisters and that Billiam Hill, as in the service records, is "Billious." Who wouldn't want to change his name to "William"? "Uncle Bell" might easily have been understood to be Uncle Bill so it would be quite natural for descendants to make an error in name. We would like to solve this riddle and if these two points can be proven we will know that all Aunt Eliza's grand and great-grandfathers were Revolutionary soldiers with the exception of Samuel Skeels who died in the French and Indian War of camp fever.

Miss Mabel Skeels, who is the daughter of Burton Gardner Skeels, and lives near Delaware, Ohio, has been so kind as to send us the following copy of the family record of her grandfather, Nelson Skeels (Aunt Eliza's uncle).

Nelson Skeels Family
Fifth Generation

Nelson[5] Skeels (Belden[4], Samuel[3], John[2], John[1]) b. May 15, 1802 at Dunham, Canada, m. Elanor Bennett at Orange Tp. Delaware County, Ohio, May 16, 1824 by the Rev. Bills; d. 1859 month not given.

Elanor Bennett, b. May 7, 1808 in Delaware County, Ohio and d. April 19, 1880.

Their children were, (All born in Orange Tp. Delaware County):

1. Mabel Leanna, b. Nov. 19, 1827, m. Edwin E. Root about the year 1849.
2. Julia, b. Aug. 29, 1829, d. Jan. 10, 1848.
3. Harriet Elizabeth, b. Aug. 1, 1832, d. 1867 or 1868, m. Henry Nutt.
4. Russel Town, b. Sept. 14, 1834, (named for Aunt Roxey's husband, Aunt Eliza Town's father) m. Jane Elizabeth Conway d. Apr. 25, 1891 at Westerville, Ohio.
5. Wesley, b. Sept. 21, 1836, d. year unknown.
6. Jane Catherine, b. July 1, 1838, d. Sept. 15, 1916, never married.
7. Burton Gardner, b. Oct. 14, 1840, d. Jan. 10, 1910, m. Clarrissa Alice Palmer, August 31, 1865.
8. Henry, b. July 5, 1842, d. year unknown.
9. William Belden, b. May 22, 1844, d. in the latter sixties.
10. Ida Iona Regina, b. Aug. 30, 1847, d. year unknown.

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